US Army Corps of Engineers ®

Safety FLASH

SNAKE BITES

Snakebites

Venomous snakebites are rare, and they are rarely fatal to humans. Of the 8,000 snakebite victims in the United States each year, only about 10 to 15 die. However, for any snakebite the best course of action is to get medical care as soon as possible.

•Try to keep the snakebite victim still, as movement helps the venom spread through the body.

•Keep the injured body part motionless and just below heart level.

•Keep the victim warm, calm, and at rest, and transport him or her immediately to medical care. Do not allow him to eat or drink anything.

•If medical care is more than half an hour away, wrap a bandage a few inches above the bite, keeping it loose enough to enable blood flow (you should be able to fit a finger beneath it). Do not cut off blood flow with a tight tourniquet. Leave the bandage in place until reaching medical care.

•Try to identify the snake so the proper antivenin can be administered, but do not waste time or endanger yourself trying to capture or kill it.

•If you are alone and on foot, start walking slowly toward help, exerting the injured area as little as possible. If you run or if the bite has delivered a large amount of venom, you may collapse, but a snakebite seldom results in death.

Be Safe, Share The Ways!